



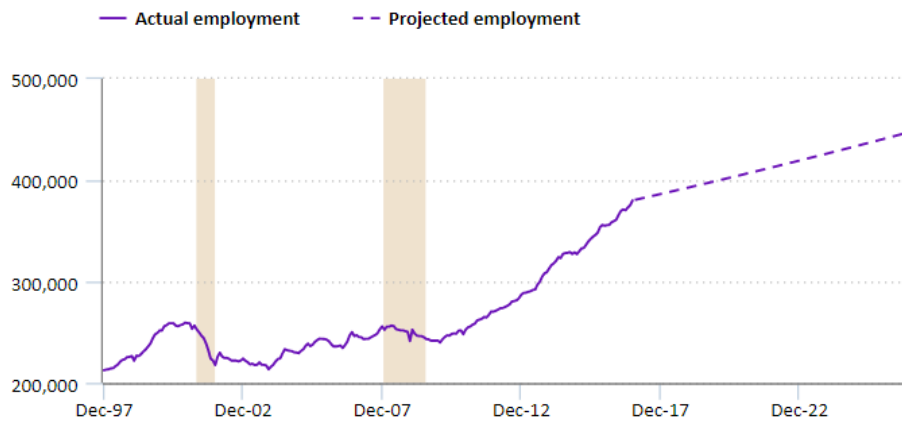
Employment growth and wages in e-commerce

Elka Torpey | December 2018

Online shopping can make gift giving easier. That's thanks, in part, to the hundreds of thousands of e-commerce workers who help to fill orders—not just during the holidays, but year round.

E-commerce workers are employed in the electronic shopping and mail-order houses industry. And according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the number of those workers is growing: From December 1997 to December 2016, employment in electronic shopping and mail-order houses increased by nearly 80 percent. (See chart.) BLS projects that employment in this industry will continue to rise, reaching almost 450,000 jobs by 2026.

Chart 1. Employment in the electronic shopping and mail-order houses industry, December 1997–2016 and projected 2016–26



Note: BLS does not project specific data for each of the interim years to the 2026 projection point. These years are expressed as a dashed straight line.

Shaded areas denote recessions as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey (1997–2016 nonfarm wage and salary employment, seasonally adjusted) and Employment Projections program (2016–26 projected employment).



Which occupations are expected to add jobs in the industry in the coming decade? Employment is projected to increase in occupations that have tasks such as taking and filling orders, packing boxes, and creating websites. As the table shows, [customer service representatives](#) is the occupation expected to have more new jobs than any other through 2026 in electronic shopping and mail-order houses.

Table 1. Selected occupations projected to add jobs in electronic shopping and mail-order houses, 2016–26

Employment, 2016 and projected 2016–26; median annual wage, 2017; and typical entry-level education and training



Occupation	Employment, 2016	New jobs, projected 2016–26	Median annual wage, 2017	Typical entry-level education	On-the-job training
Customer service representatives	52,500	8,300	\$30,280	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training
Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks	26,900	6,000	28,610	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training
Stock clerks and order fillers	16,500	4,700	25,880	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training
Retail salespersons	16,200	4,600	24,280	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
Packers and packagers, hand	15,600	4,500	24,440	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	14,600	4,200	30,330	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
Market research analysts and marketing specialists	7,700	3,200	57,110	Bachelor's degree	None
Order clerks	19,600	3,100	30,140	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training
General and operations managers	8,100	2,300	92,800	Bachelor's degree	None
Software developers, applications	4,900	2,000	99,260	Bachelor's degree	None
Web developers	4,300	1,200	64,190	Associate's degree	None
Light truck or delivery services drivers	3,200	900	34,180	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training

Note: Employment and wage data do not include self-employed workers. None of these occupations typically requires work experience in a related occupation for entry, except general and operations managers, which typically needs 5 years or more of experience.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections.

Wages and typical entry-level education requirements for these occupations vary. For example, [applications software developers](#) had the highest median wage in the industry among the occupations shown: \$99,260, more than twice the \$37,690 median wage for all workers in 2017; in contrast, [retail sales workers](#) made \$24,280 annually at the median, well below the median wage for all workers. Entry-level requirements for occupations in the table range from a bachelor's degree to no formal educational credential.

These data do not include self-employed workers. But data from the U.S. Census Bureau show that the number of businesses with no paid employees nearly doubled in the electronic shopping and mail-order houses industry over a decade, from 77,022 establishments in 2006 to 150,595 in 2016. Most of these establishments were self-employed people operating small, unincorporated businesses.

Industry employment data from 1997 to 2016 are from the BLS [Current Employment Statistics](#) program. Industry and occupational projections data are from the BLS [Employment Projections](#) program.

You can learn more about the occupations mentioned here, as well as hundreds of others, in the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) (OOH).

For the latest [Nonemployer Statistics](#), visit the U.S. Census Bureau website.

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